

25 January - 8 February 2021

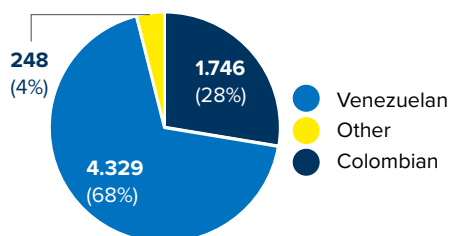


Nelsi Medina is a Venezuelan entrepreneur who opened her restaurant with UNHCR's support. Read her story at page 4.
Photo: ACNUR/Santiago Arcos

Figures at a glance

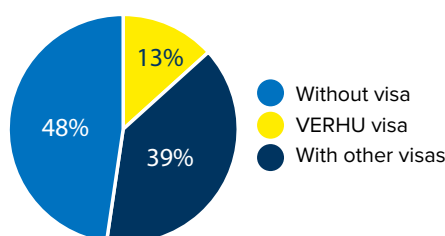
70.095
people have been
recognized as refugees

Asylum applications in 2020



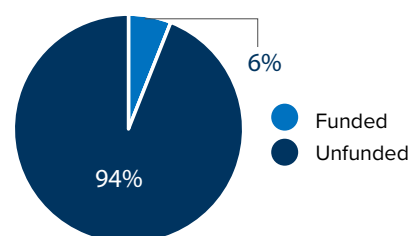
415.835
Venezuelans are currently
living in Ecuador

Venezuelan's migratory situation



\$ 84.5 million
UNHCR's financial
requirements for 2021

UNHCR Ecuador funding situation



Primary needs

Access to basic needs: food, shelter, clothes
75,4%

Access to employment,
education and health
services
16,9%

Documents and
regularization
6% Other
1,7%

Results of High Frequency Surveys conducted at the end of 2020 to 380 households (1,501 people).

Operational context

COVID-19: COVID-19 confirmed cases have surpassed 250.000 nationwide. Although UNHCR has adapted to the situation, some activities are being affected because of the pandemic. In Ibarra, the Municipal Community Kitchen, supported by UNHCR and WFP, which provides 300 daily meals, had to close for temporarily due to COVID-19 cases among the staff.

BORDER MOVEMENTS: The southern border continues to be closed and has been militarized by the Peruvian Government to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Increased border enforcement has generated uncertainty among the Venezuelan population and periodic build-ups have occurred in border points.

At the northern border, Venezuelans' arrivals have slightly decreased from 2,000 to 1,000 during the past

two weeks, partly due to increased military activity in Colombia. Arrivals continue through less visible irregular paths, exposing refugees to greater risks.

PROTECTION CONCERNS: The militarization of the Peruvian border has reoriented the influx and increased protection concerns. Many Venezuelans are waiting in Ecuadorian cities for the situation at the southern border to improve, sleeping in the streets, and exposing themselves to severe risks and xenophobia. Additionally, COVID-19 has impacted refugees' mental health and access to livelihoods. Many of them have been forced to engage in negative coping mechanisms such as survival sex to survive. The number of newly arrived Colombians approaching UNHCR's offices increased in January 2021. Most of them fled their country due to violence and threats from irregular armed groups.

UNHCR joined efforts to respond to the humanitarian situation in Huaquillas



Together with other UN Agencies, Government Authorities and members of the Refugee and Migrant Working Group, UNHCR's Representative participated in Huaquilla's Zonal Human Mobility Roundtable to address the situation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants stranded at the southern border.

Among other activities, the RMWG developed a [rapid interagency assessment](#) to identify their profile and needs, and coordinated a response comprising shelter, protection, food security, hygiene, safe water, legal assistance, and biosecurity implements for COVID-19 prevention.

UNHCR's staff in Huaquillas has been delivering hygiene kits to families in situations of extreme vulnerability.

Immersive documentary wins Latin American Award



[Cruzar](#), an immersive 360 short documentary developed by the film producer agency Iman Transmedia with UNHCR Ecuador's support, won the POY Latam Award for excellence and innovation in the experimental visual storytelling. POY Latam is one of the most prestigious photography and documentary awards in Latin America.

The documentary, filmed at the end of 2019, tells the story of a Venezuelan woman who walks with her daughter from Tulcan to Quito, where her cousin is waiting for her. Her goal is to earn money so that her other siblings may join her from Venezuela.

Refugees and migrants received certificates of labor competency

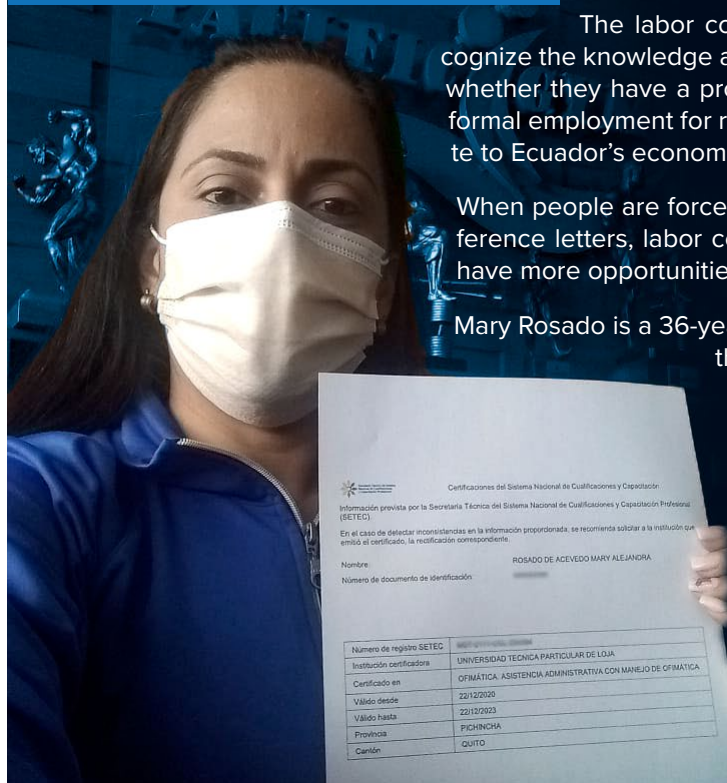
On January, 294 refugees and migrants completed the process of labor competency recognition regulated by the Ministry of Labor. The process was organized by UNHCR and the Technical University of Loja, an accredited certification body with a national presence.

The labor competency certification is an instrument that seeks to recognize the knowledge and skills of people to perform an occupation, regardless of whether they have a professional degree. These certifications facilitate access to formal employment for refugees and migrants, who have multiple skills to contribute to Ecuador's economic recovery.

When people are forced to flee their countries, they do not have time to carry reference letters, labor certificates, and academic degrees. With this tool, they will have more opportunities of contributing with their skills to their host communities.

Mary Rosado is a 36-year-old Venezuelan who fled her country in 2019. With more than 19 years of experience in administration, it was not easy to find a job. She is one of the refugees who completed the certification process and is now working as an administrative assistant.

The certification tests were conducted by UTPL, under all biosafety protocols at their facilities in Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca, Loja, and Manta, and ended on January 9, 2021. UNHCR provided the list of beneficiaries after an open call in which they registered candidates through email, phone call, and messaging.



Listen to Mary's testimony
(in spanish)

UNHCR inaugurated a shelter for children at risk



In coordination with AVSI and Lago Agrio's Municipality, UNHCR inaugurated the *Casa Hogar Mis Pequeños Valientes*, a shelter for children and adolescents victims of abuse and mistreatment.

The shelter is located in Lago Agrio, Amazon border with Colombia, and has a dormitory block with the capacity of sheltering 30 Ecuadorian, refugee, and migrant children and adolescents. The space will be managed by the Social Action Unit of the Lago Agrio' Municipality and the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion.

Cases arriving to the shelter will be referred by the Cantonal Board for the Protection of Rights after having suffered physical and psychological violence. *Mis Pequeños Valientes* will function as a mechanism for monitoring, responding, and evaluating public policies to protect children and adolescents in human mobility, especially refugees, derived from the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Refugees received Ecuadorian ID cards



Listen to Estela's testimony
(in spanish)

Between December 2020 and January 2021, some 1,000 refugees and members of the indigenous Awá community in El Chical and Maldonado received their identity cards after participating in registration brigades. Having documentation, besides preventing statelessness, will allow them to access essential services. For example, domestic gas tanks, necessary for cooking, are delivered upon presentation of an identity card.


At the end of December 2020, UNHCR, together with the Civil Registry, the Ombudsman's Office, and UNHCR'S partner FUDELA, organized two brigades. In the first one, 134 refugees participated. Usually, this process is carried out only in three cities: Quito, Guayaquil, and Cuenca, the closest more than eight hours away by bus. This brigade's main objective was to mitigate the risks of contracting COVID-19 while traveling and to support those who did not have the resources to travel to another city. During the second brigade, 822 people underwent the identification process, 90% of them from the Awá indigenous community. The delivery of ID cards ended during the third week of January.

Our response to COVID-19 in figures

18 March 2020 - 11 February 2021

 **26,106**

families benefitted from CBI Multipurpose and Protection transactions.

 **730,876**

health material such as PPE, sanitizers, thermometers and oximeters donated.

 **183**

Refugee Housing Units installed to serve as triage and prehospitalization areas.

 **22,157**

hygiene kits donated to population of concern, shelters and public institutions..

 **131**

hand-washing stations installed at shelters and health centers.

 **16,360**

clothes donated to 3968 people of concern.

 **27,670**

food kits delivered to families in situation of extreme vulnerability.

 **26,310**

cases attended from UNHCR's emergency hotlines nationwide.

 **10,256**

users access to UNHCR's WhatsApp automated line. (from 1 November 2020)

Stories from the field

**"In times of crisis, you
deserve what you **dream** .
Go for it!"**

Listen to Nelsi's testimony
(in spanish)

Nelsi Medina: the Venezuelan entrepreneur whose business survived the pandemic

In 2017, Nelsi (33) and her seven-year-old son Fernando had no other option but to flee Venezuela. Years after they settled in Portoviejo, Ecuador, she decided to pursue her dream of opening a small restaurant with money loaned by friends and family.

On 5 March 2020, the [Roasted Chicken Restaurant](#) opened its doors. Nelsi never imagined that, ten days later, the Government would decree lockdown due to COVID-19. She found herself in a desperate situation, but instead of shutting down her dream, she adapted to the situation with a home delivery service and started promoting her business on social media.

Months later, she faced a new challenge: the owner of the premises they were renting died of COVID-19, and the person who inherited the place evicted them. Nelsi and her family were never able to take with themselves the appliances they bought for their business. Once again, she fought back. She borrowed money from her friends to rent another place, and she reinvented her business, creating new recipes by fusing Ecuadorian and Venezuelan gastronomy.

During the pandemic, Nelsi participated in *En Marcha Digital*, a program to strengthen refugees' entrepreneurship. She received training in digital marketing, product innovation, new sales channels, graphic design, and brand management.

Since she put in practice what she learned in her business, sales have exponentially grown. "Since I joined the program, my dreamed restaurant has been taking shape. My family has supported me, and now we are more united and happier", she says.



We thank the contributions of our donors

Updated to 9 February, 2021

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